Women engaged in agriculture sector

†396*. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

the number of women engaged in the work of sowing, harvesting, weeding, crushing etc. in agriculture sector out of 90.95 million self employed women;

the number of women labour force in the year 1999-2000,2004-05 and 2006-07;

the amount of contribution of this labour force in the national income; and

how Government define this labour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) The details regarding number of self employed women engaged in sowing, harvesting, weeding, crushing etc. in agriculture sector are not maintained in the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

The estimated number of women labour force was 125.IS million in 1999-2000 and the number increased to 152.95 million in 2004-05 according to the 61 round of NSSO Reports. The data for the year 2006-07 is not available.

There is no mechanism to calculate the contribution of women in GDP separately. However,, the contribution of Agriculture Sector in total GDP is 18.3% in 2006-07.

As per the NSSO Survey, a person was treated as an agriculture labour if he/she followed one or more of the following agriculture occupations in the capacity of a labourer on hire, whether paid wholly in cash or kind or partly in cash and partly in kind:

(i) farming including cultivation, tillage etc.;

(ii) dairy farming;

(iii) production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any horticulture commodity:

(iv) raising of livestock, bee-keeping or poultry farming;

(v) any practice performed on a farm as incidental to or in conjunction with farm operations (including any forestry or timbering and the preparation for market or to carriage for transportation to market of farm products).

Allowing of children below 14 to sell ice-cream and soft drinks

3969. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

whether Government is considering a proposal to improve India's poor record on child labour;

if so, the details in this regard;

whether Government is considering a proposal that allows children below the age of 14 for selling ice-cream or soft drinks; and

if so, me reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government is committed to elimination of child labour from the country and is implementing the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme in 250 districts of the country for the rehabilitation of child labour. Under the Scheme, children withdrawn from hazardous occupations and processes are put into special schools, where they are provided with accelerated bridging education, vocational training, nutrition, stipend and health care facilities etc., before they are mainstreamed into regular education.

(c) and (d) While there is no specific proposal to prohibit children below the age of 14 •years from selling cold drinks and ice-creams, the Government had prohibited employment of children in dhabas, hotels, road-side eateries etc., with effect from 10.10.06 which may include the selling of cold drinks and ice-creams in dhabas and road side eateries etc.

Use of child labour for making of clothes

3970. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

whether Government has decided to form a Committee to check the child labour charges reported in the leading newspaper London that an international clothing brand has called an emergency meeting with its suppliers in India after a report in a newspaper claimed that some of its clothes were made in a sweatshop in New Delhi by using the child labour;

if so, whether Government has decided to enquire the issue; and

if so, the details thereof and the action taken against those held responsible?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, Government has taken a series of steps for elimination of child labour from export oriented industries. This includes various measures taken by the export promotion councils to eliminate use of child labour and also the awareness and monitoring programmes conducted by the Export Promotion Councils for the purpose. Government of India has taken up this issue of use of child labour in the export-oriented industries with all the Indian Embassies/High Commissions abroad to sensitize them on the issue of child labour and their possible impact. Government has also taken up this matter with various trade councils to ensure that no child labour is employed by the member exporters. Further, the steps taken by the Government in the carpet sector also inplude regular surveillance on child labour undertaken by a professional agency, setting up of National Level Steering Committee, formulation of a code of conduct for the various Carpet Export Promotion Councils to ensure that no child labour prohibited by law is employed.

For the rehabilitation of children withdrawn from hazardous work including the export-oriented industries, Government is also implementing the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme in 250 districts of the country which include the areas from where exports are being made from the country.

Action under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 is initiated against the employers who are found to be violating the provisions of the Act.